United Nations A/73/642

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 December 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session
Agenda items 136 and 52

Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

Effects of atomic radiation

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Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.4/73/L.9

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.4/73/L.9 (A/C.5/73/8). During its consideration of the statement, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 6 December 2018.

2. Under the terms of operative paragraph 18 of draft resolution A/C.4/73/L.9, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to strengthen support for the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation within existing resources, in particular with regard to the deputization of the Secretary of the Scientific Committee, the avoidance of disruptions in staffing and the increase in operational costs in the case of a further increase in membership, and to report to the Assembly at its seventy-fourth session on those issues.

3. In relation to the draft resolution, regarding the strengthening of support for the Scientific Committee, in the statement of the Secretary-General it is proposed to reclassify one existing P-4 post to the P-5 level as Deputy Secretary, as a result of which additional requirements in the amount of $24,900, under section 14, Environment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 would arise annually, starting 1 January 2019 (see A/C.5/73/8, paras. 4 and 7).

4. In paragraph 5 of the statement of the Secretary-General it is indicated that the incumbent of the proposed P-5 post would perform the duties of the Secretary of the Scientific Committee during the Secretary's absence, including organizing the annual session of the Scientific Committee, sending notes verbales and invitation letters to representatives of Member States, meeting high-level diplomats, making decisions

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with regard to the budget and representing the secretariat of the Committee at official meetings.

5. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as the post of the Secretary of the Scientific Committee is at the D-1 level, the proposed reclassification of the P-4 post to the P-5 level would operationalize the request in the draft resolution on the deputization of the Committee's Secretary. The Committee was also informed that, as no deputy is currently in place, in the absence of the Secretary during the 2018 session of the Scientific Committee, the Scientific Officer (P-4) provided support.

6. Regarding the recruitment process, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry that, since January 2017, when the former Secretary of the Scientific Committee tendered his resignation, the United Nations Environment Programme had launched three rounds of recruitment exercises for the D-1 post of Committee Secretary, but had not been able, in the first two rounds, to identify a suitable candidate. With respect to the current, third, round of recruitment, the process of interviewing the applicants has been completed and the results have been passed on for consideration to the Central Review Board.

7. **The Advisory Committee is not fully convinced by the justifications for the proposed reclassification, in particular why deputization at the P-4 level would not be adequate at this stage. In addition, the Committee takes note of the advanced stage of the recruitment process for the D-1 position of Secretary of the Scientific Committee, and is of the view that any deputization arrangements should await the outcome of the recruitment process. Following the selection of the new Secretary, the Secretary-General may consider making proposals for the strengthening of the Scientific Committee in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2020. Therefore, the Committee recommends against the approval of the proposed reclassification of one P-4 post to the P-5 level as Deputy Secretary. The Committee also encourages the Secretary-General to expedite the completion of the recruitment process for the position of Secretary of the Scientific Committee.**

8. With respect to the draft resolution, regarding the increase in operational costs in the case of a further increase in membership, the statement of the Secretary-General indicates that, given that the modalities and timing of possible increases in membership are not specified, the Secretary-General would issue the related budgetary implications when such decisions are made (A/C.5/73/8, para. 6). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that, if so decided by the General Assembly, four countries currently with observer status would become members in 2021.

9. **The Advisory Committee recommends against the approval of the proposed reclassification of one established P-4 post to the P-5 level as Deputy Secretary under section 14, Environment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019. Accordingly, the Committee also recommends against the related resource requirements of $24,900 under section 14, Environment, and the amount of $4,400 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019.**